

With a heart for traveling and love for interior decorating, Ms. Williams was the kind of person anyone would want to spend time with. She was a caring mother and loving grandmother, and her transition is a deep and profound loss for her family and our community.

Ms. Williams will be truly missed. May she rest in peace and power.

INVESTING IN COMMUNITIES

(Mr. KILMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KILMER. Madam Speaker, the America COMPETES Act is about creating jobs and spurring innovation all across our country. It is about recognizing that America can't compete if it leaves communities behind and that we need to get all of our best players on the field if we are going to win economically.

Today's bill includes a pilot version of my RECOMPETE Act, which would provide some flexible, long-term support to empower communities that have struggled so that they can grow jobs and strengthen their economies. For some communities, that may mean investments in workforce development; for others, broadband; for some, support for entrepreneurs.

I grew up on the Olympic Peninsula of Washington State, and now I am proud to represent it. We have amazing assets and outstanding people, but there is a real concern in some communities that their town's main export may be young people, as prospects for the future often seem brighter somewhere else.

But with today's vote, we are saying that we don't believe in leaving communities behind. We are saying that people should have economic opportunity regardless of what ZIP Code they live in, and we are saying that we can't wait.

RECHARGING IN LAS VEGAS

(Ms. TITUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. TITUS. Madam Speaker, a recent United Nations report confirmed that climate change represents nothing less than a code red for humanity.

We know the largest contributor to emissions is transportation, and that is why efforts to decarbonize this sector are so important if we are serious about fighting climate change.

Modernizing our transportation sector and moving toward a clean energy future means building electric vehicle infrastructure, something that the new law does with the first-ever Federal investments in a national EV charging network.

In Nevada, this will bring over \$38 million to build EV stations throughout the State, helping us to have a higher percentage of electric vehicles

on the road, reduce our emissions, and address climate change.

People often come to Las Vegas to recharge, and now, thanks to the infrastructure law, they will be able to do it in other ways and in other places.

RECOGNIZING HOPE THAT BINDS

(Mr. COMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COMER. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Hope That Binds, a ministry based out of Cunningham, Kentucky, that supports west Kentucky families by providing critical adoption resources.

Hope That Binds is an outstanding regional leader when it comes to helping families pursuing adoption through financial assistance and counseling.

I am proud of my constituents, Wendy Davis-Wilson, Jeff and Benita Davis, Brooke Kelly, and Gracie Reynolds, for their significant contributions to this great organization.

Adoption provides a home for needy children as well as an opportunity to raise a child for hopeful parents. Belonging to a family is a natural and vital component of life, and every child deserves a loving and nurturing home.

Hope That Binds' commitment to the gift and treasure of adoption is heartwarming and a great example of giving back to the less vulnerable.

February 7 to 11 is a week of celebration and awareness for this wonderful nonprofit, and I am proud to recognize them for their incredible work. On behalf of my constituents, I congratulate Hope That Binds for supporting some of the most vulnerable members of our society.

□ 1200

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Madam Speaker, before we begin, I actually want to yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT).

HONORING THE LIFE OF TRISTAN KROGIUS

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise to honor Tristan Krogus, father of our former House colleague, Mimi Walters.

Tris passed away peacefully on December 30, 2021. He was born in Tammerfors, Finland, and emigrated to New York with his family in 1939 as a refugee from the Russian invasion of Finland.

Tris attended the University of New Mexico on an NROTC scholarship and served as a marine officer from 1954 to 1960. In 1952, he and the love of his life, Barbara Brophy, eloped. After Tris left

the Marine Corps, he began a business career in California.

Tris rose to become president of Hunt-Wesson, Frozen and Refrigerated Foods, and later president of Dalgety Limited's U.S. food division. In 1987, he retired as president and CEO of Teneco West and, after retiring, Tris earned a law degree in 1990 and was admitted to the California bar.

Tris was an active member of his community. He was past board president and CEO of the South Coast Medical Center in Laguna Beach and was a director of many nonprofit organizations.

Tris is survived by his wife of 69 years, Barbara; their six children and their spouses; 19 grandchildren; and four great grandchildren.

Tris will be remembered for the extraordinary example that he set for his life.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Madam Speaker, we all get behind these microphones on occasion and we want to share something. And tonight, I am going to try to stay on a theme. I am going to try to walk through one of my intense frustrations around here that we keep making public policy.

Let's be honest. We just passed—the Democrats, I don't think a single Republican voted for it—a \$350 billion bill that originally was labeled as America COMPETES Act. But if you look at the math in it and the spending in it, it is functionally, hey, let's give lots of money to our special interests who actually support them politically.

So here's the theme. If I came to any Member of Congress, any one of our staff, anyone out there listening in the public and said, What makes people poor? Seriously. What makes our brothers and sisters who are working poor poor?

And you get these discussions, Oh, we don't tax rich people enough and transfer their wealth, or we don't do this, or we don't do that. And it turns out, when you actually look at the math, almost none of those things are actually true.

It is complicated. So we have been doing a project for almost a year in our office, of trying to understand what is different. So we held a hearing recently, on health disparities. Guess what?

There really are health disparities between certain urban minority populations, my Tribal communities in the Southwest. But why?

Also, take a look. There is crime, crime differential. When someone steals your stuff or breaks your bones, you're not able to go to work, you're not able to accumulate.

You actually start to look at all these things that are societal factors. You open up the border, you are competing against others with similar skill sets, labor sets.

And my argument is, over this last 12 months of unified leftist, unified Democrat control of government, we are just crushing people. We are crushing

the working poor. We are crushing the middle class. And the data—I am going to prove it.

But one of the most interesting things we have been looking at—and we have actually taken some ridicule for fixating on this, but the math is the math.

I would typically start these presentations with take a look at the accumulation of U.S. sovereign debt. It is exploding. Twenty-nine years, \$12 trillion, and that is based on last year's CBO math. It is Social Security and Medicare, primarily Medicare. But 31 percent of Medicare spending and borrowing is just diabetes.

But also, that other project we have been doing of what makes certain populations poor. Well, it turns out our brothers and sisters who are often working poor or just trying to survive, have dramatically higher health problems, and it is primarily diabetes. In rural poverty, in my Tribal poverty, in my urban poverty, look at the diabetic numbers.

So wouldn't the most compassionate thing be to not do what the left keeps saying, we are going to build more clinics, help people live with their misery. But how about doing something revolutionary? How about curing, how about investing in curing our brothers and sisters who suffer?

And we are working, and it is hard, and it is difficult math. But what would happen if you got a cure to income inequality? Well, then you would have to eventually adjust for crime and open borders and all the other things that we are going to talk about.

And we have taken some ridicule saying, well, type 1, type 2 diabetes, you can't—well, it turns out we have been tracking the science. And there was a time we used to have this constant debate here where Democrats would accuse Republicans of not following the science. And we are obviously, particularly with COVID, accusing the Democrats.

But does anyone here actually have an alert on their search engines to track the news stories of some of the really amazing stuff happening?

So this is a story, functionally, from yesterday, and it is a unique approach. They are functionally doing a CRISPR-altered stem cell. And the beauty of that is, what happens if I can get your body to start producing insulin again?

And because we know type 1 diabetes, and part of type 2, is an autoimmune reaction. Your body is killing the cells that produce insulin. And so with that little bit of CRISPR technology, your body doesn't recognize it, and doesn't kill the very cell that is producing the ability to take on your glucose. It has begun. It has actually moved into type 1.

So think of this. We just spent \$350 billion—well, at least the Democrats are trying to—and something like this, if you had done a version of Operation Warp Speed or call it whatever you want if that is too Trumpian for the left.

But the single biggest driver of U.S. debt is diabetes; 33 percent of all healthcare spending; 31 percent of Medicare spending. You would think this place would be almost giddy.

Now, maybe it doesn't work maybe, ultimately. But the ability to say, we are going to do something that is noble, compassionate, loving, and cure the misery instead of keeping populations sort of trapped in their misery because they are beholden to one political party's largesse.

It is beginning. This is the type of disruption—this is symbolic of the type of disruption that makes the country wealthier, more prosperous, and minimizes misery. And we have been talking about this technology coming for about a year. Why are we not doing more investing in it?

So the White House has an initiative. Wonderful, but they need to redesign—and the same thing here in the House—we need to redesign where the resources of primary research, or the incentive to bring a product to market, or the timing it takes to make it through the math of a phase one, phase two, phase three.

We do it the wrong way. Just as the Democrats' bill they just passed where it is command and control, it is almost a 5-year plan. The Federal Government will decide who gets a grant, who doesn't get a grant. You now have to come be really nice to the administration and your Member of Congress if you want money for your business.

The arrogance of this place. One of the hazards of Members of Congress—it is like that running joke: What are the two times in life you think you know everything? When you are 13 years old, and the day after you get elected to Congress.

The debate here often sounds like it is a decade out of date. But think about the board I was just showing. If there really is—and it is now in phase one trial—an ability to cure type 1 and make a dramatic difference in type 2, try to understand what that means for the financials of the country and the world, what that actually means for health and misery.

But also, what it potentially means for populations that we talk about constantly, we virtue-signal constantly, but we don't actually do something in raising their living standards, raising their economics, closing income inequality.

And instead, we are in a body right now with unified Democrat control where the solution is, send someone a check. Well, sending someone a check doesn't end the misery. Disruptive technology like this is what cures the misery that is what we should be almost evangelizing here. And I know that is hard.

So let's talk about some of the other things that make the working class poorer, the working poor substantially poorer. We saw—and I know there have been many Members here who have come and talked about inflation, but I

don't think we have understood the misery it ultimately brings. And it is the slow type of misery, because every time we go to the grocery store, that piece of protein you wanted, or that milk, or something else gets a little bit more expensive. Your paycheck may have gone up, but somehow everything you are buying goes up more.

And we are going to walk through a couple of boards here, just showing the fact of the matter under Democratic unified control of government, our society has actually gotten poorer, even though we have pumped stunning amounts of money, of cash into the society, and we are going to sort of show that.

So understand, we all saw the number at the end of the year, 7 percent inflation. In my home, I am from the Phoenix area, we are approaching 9 percent, a lot of that is driven by housing. Imagine what this index did to homelessness.

We are going to see some statistics here of the narcotics and other things that have been coming across the border now that we have sort of an open border policy from the left.

And instead, I would like to talk about the economics and the misery such policies have brought and how it all ties together.

So let's go back a little more on inflation. If you think about inflation, how many times have you heard our brothers and sisters on the left get behind their microphones and talk about, it is increasing inequality?

So I thought that was the Holy Grail here. Close inequality. But yet, their policies keep growing it. We are seeing some numbers here where there is about \$3,500 of additional spread of inequality, driven by a single year's worth of policies that drove up inflation.

And the solution from the left is well, we are going to send them another check, even though the check is actually what substantially drove creating inflation.

Remember, basic economics. Remember your elementary school and your high school economics class. What is inflation? It is too many dollars chasing too few goods and services. Real simple. The real world is actually a little more complicated, but that is classic.

So you have two things: You can keep jacking up interest rates to squeeze out liquidity of dollars chasing those goods or, or and, or plus, you can do the other side, like we did in 1981. They raised interest rates.

But people forget, the first year of President Reagan, even with a Democrat Congress, they adopted tax cuts and policies to make more stuff. If you have lots of dollars out that chasing things, you have got a couple of solutions. You could squeeze the dollars out of the economy to lower inflation, or you can make more stuff, because it is too many dollars chasing not enough goods.

Okay. Make more stuff. It is a classic supply-side solution. Make the tax code, the regulatory code, the incentives to make more stuff.

Instead, we just passed a \$350 billion bill that functionally puts government in charge of grants and control of what they want, instead of the information part of the market, where resources, where the ability to act quickly, we should be incentivizing the animal spirits to go make more stuff as a way to lower this inflation that is crushing people. And it is a much more elegant way because it creates jobs, it creates products. But for some reason, the left is almost maniacal in a Keynesian view of the world saying, well, do lots of stimulus.

□ 1215

Madam Speaker, they seem unwilling to even accept the data produced by their side that says they have raised the misery of so many Americans.

Understand that the math at the end of the year was pretty simple. Inflation went up, and people's wages went up, but there is a gap. The gap keeps growing, and that gap is the fact you got poorer last year.

This is the one that I am still just shocked there is not more discussion about. If you see the percentage of monthly change in real wages—remember, you may get your paycheck. Your paycheck may go up. If your rent, your fuel, your food, everything else in your life went up more—you see how many months people got poorer.

If you look at the way we are doing policy here, it is the administration and my Democratic colleagues' willingness to continue to spend money at just stunning levels in ways that the economics say you are going to actually make people poorer. Planned economy hasn't worked particularly well anywhere in the world.

You start to see the data of the gap, and we have not tried to present this in a mean way. The fact of the matter is, the Democrat policies—remember, they took over Congress 3 years ago. They now have unified government after the last election. The gap between the wealthy and the poor is growing.

Do you remember 2018 and 2019 and the vicious rhetoric that came from our brothers and sisters on the left after we did tax reform? Yet, in modern economic times, it was the greatest success we have had in shrinking income inequality. You are going to see some boards here where food insecurity, it worked.

Our brothers and sisters on the lower quartiles—and I always hate that term. The fact of the matter is, they became dramatically less poor. Then when the Democrats take power, they abandon the very things that were working. Their policies, at some point you have to admit to everyone, because we are feeling and seeing it, you have made the rich richer; you have made the poor poorer; you have increased the misery.

Madam Speaker, we all know the saying. When something isn't working, stop it. Take a breath. Take a look at what was working. It turns out the ideological calcification that is Congress now is more important to that dogma than what actually works.

So, we sort of walk through these. I know this seems like a lot, but we keep trying to make the point over and over that the data is factual. It is not just information by virtue signaling. The data is the data is the data.

This is my comment from the quarantine. So these are our brothers and sisters. We are calling them the lower 20 percent. Well, how much of their income goes to housing, transportation, food?

Now, you notice these numbers are off the chart. That is because they also receive subsidies, earned income tax credits, other things we do to try to make their life less miserable.

Somewhere along the way, this body forgot that if you are poor, I mean truly poor, that bottom 20 percent, the majority of your income goes to housing. What did the Democrats accomplish this last year? We blew up the price of rent.

There were speeches from a number of us from 1 to 2 years ago, saying you need to create the safety net. You need to create a bottom so the economy snaps back, but be careful. When you create too much liquidity, government spending, you are going to blow up the cost of everything for people. It happened.

What is the solution? The left now talks about doing another stimulus bill to make their lives even more miserable.

Maybe it is the arrogance of: These folks in the poorer quartiles, they have been indoctrinated. They are going to vote for the left. So just abuse the crap out of them. They are still going to vote for you.

The fact of the matter is, if you look at the real data of who votes for the Democrats anymore, it is the urban elite. That is who finances their campaigns. It is no longer the working men and women. They migrated much more to the Republican side.

So maybe what I am seeing is politically logical, but economically, it is brutal. The math is the math. At some point behind the math are people who are suffering.

Think about this. You just saw on the chart where the lowest couple of quartiles spend most of their money just trying to do housing. Take a look at what we have done to the housing prices. This is mostly rent. You know, when you are in that bottom third, you are a renter. How many people right now who are renting we now are responsible for economic policies, liquidity of cash, where we have blown up the cost of housing, blown up the cost of rent, that we now will have trapped so much of America into being permanent renters for the rest of their lives? They are never going to build that sav-

ings account that owning a house is and that became part of being able to retire and is part of the American Dream.

The math is the math. You look at African Americans, Latino populations, and the amount that has moved into struggling just to cover the rent, it has blown up dramatically.

This just doesn't disappear. You don't wake up tomorrow and say, hey, we decided we are going to do economic policies, regulatory policies, tax policies. So we make a lot more stuff. Yes, the Federal Reserve pulls liquidity out. It fixes inflation. Oh, isn't it neat? All the rents went back down.

It doesn't work that way. How long before these populations get their incomes back where they can actually survive, where just the cost of having a place to live isn't consuming almost every dollar of their lives?

We don't talk enough about the policies here and the misery they have created. Yet, we have pumped so much cash into the system that we take a look at State and local, and they are sitting on boatloads of cash.

There is another really interesting trend line here. How did this happen? We had the speeches here 1 year ago, 1½ years ago. The world is coming apart. The world is falling apart. Yet, somehow state and local tax receipts actually held up dramatically well. We overshot the mark.

Then what did we do? Even though we knew they were doing just fine, the actual fall in receipts, which is the proper term for tax collections, was marginal. What did the Democrat policy do? Let's send them more cash because that is their constituents.

I want to walk through some of the other aspects that we believe left policies are making the working poor, the middle class, poorer. Here is a simple concept. I have said it over and over, but you have to understand it is this layering effect.

Let's say you are that individual that didn't graduate high school. The value you bring to work is your willingness to work. So you are the person hanging drywall. You are doing labor. You are doing landscaping. Your goal is one day you hope to own the landscaping company. You hope to own the plaster company. What you sell is your labor and your willingness to work.

What are the two ways you crush that population economically? We just did the inflation. We saw how much of their income now is going to just surviving.

The second thing you do is you make them compete against millions of others with similar skill sets. So there is this great economic argument. If you want to grow American GDP, immigration is a big deal, but it has to be immigration that has a multiplier effect on everything from tax receipts to productivity. You don't import massive poverty.

It is uncomfortable to talk about it this way. The fact of the matter is,

being a border state, what is happening at our border? You are not bringing folks who grow the economy. The data says actually what you are doing is you are making the working poor poorer.

I don't know how often anyone here will talk about our crisis at the border, which is real. Come to Arizona. Go to Texas. The societal impact, when you do it this way, we can get into some of the really interesting economic data saying, hey, when populations leave this country, you have just actually wiped out the ambitious populations because these are people willing to pack up and leave. You actually hurt the departing country. The fact of the matter is, you also hurt the folks here.

The numbers at the border are just stunning. I mean, when you start thinking of, during this administration, a couple of million folks, they may be wonderful people. It is not about them. It is the impact of the very people we claim we care about, that we claim we are trying to help. We claim we are trying to close income inequality. We claim we are trying to make the poor less poor. Then we do everything we can to crush them.

It is just the economics. I just can't figure out what the left is doing intellectually. They know this number. If it was a decade, 10, 15 years ago, all the literature we keep finding, it was Democrats who were fixated on locking down the border because they knew it hurt the poor and the working poor. They used to accuse Republicans of wanting open borders to push down labor values. Do you remember? It wasn't that long ago. The argument was flipped.

There goes my theory that maybe the left truly has abandoned working men and women in this country because they are no longer their defenders. They are almost the defenders of someone who needs a cheap landscaper.

The border numbers are real. I mean, when you start seeing the data coming from the administration itself, they make it really hard to find the actual facts. When you see numbers that are 278 percent increases, you start to realize what this is going to mean.

There is a great paper. We came here and talked about it a few months ago. It is a decade old. It talks about what happens when you get these waves of illegal crossing, and they get rolled into your economy. It was talking that it would take a decade for that lower quartile, the poor middle class, the working poor, for their incomes to start to come up.

It was solely a division of a number of people with similar skill sets attacking the same types of positions and work. It was a Democrat paper. I mean, it was written by folks who made it very clear they were on the left.

Isn't it fascinating how quickly the understanding of demographics and population dynamics—what it does to the very people that our friends on that side used to say they cared about?

We do lots of virtue signaling here and lots of pretty words. The data is

the data is the data. The policies are the policies. The policies are killing the middle class. They are killing the working poor.

You start to look at these things, and here is the great irony. Think of this. Last year, the last 2 years, legal visas have collapsed. At the same time, you have these huge runs at our border. Now, this probably requires a much more deep dive on economic multipliers and certain types of skill sets and those things. The fact of the matter is, these populations up here, we know we get an economic multiplier. These populations over here, it is uncomfortable, but it is the math. It becomes a contribution from society to them.

We did a presentation about a year ago and talked about if you saw what was happening in the entire industrialized world—remember, the only place in the world right now with positive fertility rates is sub-Saharan Africa. I know this is geeky, but it is important. I know it is not politics by shiny object, which is now what Congress is about. This is important. The Western world is collapsing demographically and fertility-wise.

□ 1230

The driver of U.S. sovereign debt is our demographics. We are getting older. Somehow Congress didn't figure out there were baby boomers until the last year or two, and now they still don't really want to talk about it; so for 65 years they just didn't know we were coming.

But what happens when you even see data—China's demographics are collapsing. Europe's we know have been collapsing. Even countries like India, we are seeing their fertility rates fall off rather dramatically.

The model basically says in the coming two, three decades, it won't be worldwide fights over hydrocarbons like we had functionally in the 1970s or rare earths. Remember how many people would come behind these mikes just a couple years ago, rare earths, we are all going to go to war over rare earths.

Turns out now that we know how to do the iron-air battery and all these other things, the rare earth consumption looks like there may be a path around the massive needs.

It turns out over the next couple decades it is going to be the battle for smart people, and that is a really interesting thing to think about.

So if we do the brilliant thing with unified leftist government, we make sure that legal visas, legal immigration crashes, but we open up our border to bring in more poverty and misery to even our own poor. I mean, you can't make this stuff up. It is just like every policy set has great headlines, great talking points, acting like you are caring, and you are completely avoiding the misery Democrat policies keep bringing to the society.

And then there are the things we sort of call second-degree, third-degree ef-

fects when you open up the border. Come to my community of Phoenix, see the dramatic increase in homelessness. Does anyone else out there care? I did a ride-along a couple weeks ago with a neighbor who is an officer, and we spent 4 or 5 hours driving around. He has been doing this, like, 28 years, and he's telling me he has never, ever seen—that the homeless population has doubled; the crime, people breaking in and stealing stuff, but they are stealing stuff from other poor people. The violence.

And then we start to see the data of my southern border in Arizona, the amount of narcotics. One of the classic—if you want to play economist, the price of drugs that are killing people has crashed. When you see the narcotics fall in price, what does that tell you? There is a hell of a lot of them.

So, okay, maybe it is leftist orthodoxy you need an open border, but did they have to flood my neighborhoods with narcotics? Did they have to spike the homelessness around the country, particularly in Phoenix? Did they have to make more people's lives miserable? Because that is what the policies of this administration and the Democrats who control this place have done. I don't think they meant to do it.

It was obvious if they thought like an economist instead of virtue signaling for policy. Remember, we make policy now around here by feelings, by what we can say behind these microphones to get someone to send us money, even if it is crap and really hurts people.

And you start to see the misery the Democrat policies have put on our streets. And of course their solution, well, we are going to send them a check. Of course, the check will also continue the cycle of inflation, making people poorer. It is just—I almost wish we could have, where there is no television cameras, no mikes, put ourselves in a room with a couple people who own calculators and say: Let's walk through what has worked in the last 25 years and the things that haven't worked.

Madam Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 25 minutes remaining.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Then when you are done doing your ride-along with the Phoenix city policeman, he is heartbroken. He has actually even moved out of the very neighborhood that he loved, that he has patrolled because even he thinks the property crime, the violent crime, the people living in the alleys has become too much for even him and his wife.

But the other thing he talked about was how many overdose deaths, how many people—now, we need to accept, a lot of this is a combination of COVID policy, economic policy. We are hunting for the 2021 number, but everything we have gotten so far, we have created misery out there.

Go pick up your community newspaper. Do they even still talk about how many have died from overdoses or has it just become so commonplace it is not worth reporting on that type of misery anymore?

And then you start to look at the crime statistics. And, look, Democrats often accuse Republicans of talking about crime to scare people. That is not where I am at. My district is an urban-suburban district. I care about these lives, but I also am fascinated by the economics of it.

Well, it turns out we did inflation, we did housing, we did the devaluing of people's labor by opening up the border, but we almost never have the conversation of how do you move out of poverty when people keep stealing your stuff?

I have what I will call an acquaintance, he is almost a friend. As a kid I used to hang drywall. He still has the drywall business. Now he has passed it on to his kids and his grandkids, and they are really good. They can do a level 5 smooth coat. That has always been my dream to learn how to do that the right way. It is a weird hobby. And he talks about they are now not doing projects in certain areas because people keep stealing their stuff, and it is really hard to keep people employed. It is really hard to be that micro-entrepreneur where you are selling your talent, and your talent is functionally your willingness to show up and the fact you have a couple drywall spades.

So we are also working on a project now in our office to try to understand how much of income inequality, people being poor, is the fact that they live in a crime-ridden area, crime-ridden ZIP Code where people keep breaking their bones and stealing their stuff; and by stealing their stuff, they can't accumulate assets, and how much of that stuff was the very things they need for work.

And then you overlay just the incredible spike of deaths, of murders that are happening in parts of the country. Now, maybe this is a societal reaction to locking up parts of the population, idleness. I don't know. I am not a sociologist. But we have to understand, so many of our urban areas across the country, there is misery.

But there is hope. If we could get our policy sets correct around here, there is incredible hope because we do have a society that desperately, an economy that desperately, a country that desperately needs people. They need workers. You see the workforce shortage continues even with today's numbers.

We need to talk a little—I will do this; this might be a weird transition. Really good unemployment numbers today. Even though unemployment actually went up as a percentage, but the number of jobs, which that is a good sign, people being willing to take the jobs, be a little careful, we need to re-take a look at what they call the labor force participation number because it has been reindexed. Every year you actually try to do a calculation.

We haven't had a chance to look at the Bureau of Labor Statistics' underlying numbers. There was a beautiful spike in labor force participation. We need to figure out how much of that, though, is they changed the numbers of the population that is available to be in the labor force. But today was a good number.

But the wage inflation number was really dangerous because we have talked about one of our models we have in the Joint Economic Committee is that if we spike much more, we are on the cusp of a wage-price spiral. And that is just a great way to create misery in the society because those are really hard to break.

Once again, we were doing, in 2018–2019—I believe much of it came because we fixed some great inequities in our Tax Code. But something, if you start to look at the data, why in this last year has there been this massive number of retirees—a million and a half more—than we ever modeled for? Why are so many people basically saying screw this, I am out of the labor market, I am disappearing?

At the very time that if we were actually doing policy where you wanted to deal with the debt, you wanted to be able to keep having enough receipts, tax revenues to be able to keep our commitments on Social Security and Medicare, if you wanted to lower the misery in the country, you would be doing policies that would be trying to get young males into the workforce—there is a weird number there where they are not showing up for the workforce—but also folks who are eligible for retirement, early retirement, to stay in the workforce.

Those are policies that I think Republicans and Democrats could agree upon, labor and business could agree upon, and yet I sometimes feel really lonely around here talking about these things. But it's the math. You see these numbers. When you are losing a million and a half folks who are choosing to retire early, you do realize the data basically says a large portion of these people in a few years, particularly if inflation continues for the next couple years, will be in poverty.

One of the greatest ways to minimize poverty for folks in their retirement years is to have them delay retirement. Something is perverse out there when we have created a society that is incentivized to go take your Social Security at 62 and take the cuts, the lower benefit. I am just really concerned about this.

And then you start to take a look at other population dynamics. And this goes back to my earlier statement that I believe in this coming decade, actually the decade we are in and the next one, the fight for smart people will be akin to the pursuit of rare earths or hydrocarbons or those things from the past.

You see it, this is happening all around us. There is a collapse in the demographics. This is China, U.S., Eu-

rope, and it is for all of us. We are less bad than some of the others, but it is miserable. And it is the great opportunity of saying if we would fix the Tax Code—and, yes, maybe it is time to look at border adjustability, so we stop having the arbitrage, and when we try to sell things there is this massive tax arbitrage of manufactured goods from the United States.

But this is our reality. And yet this place will live on being enraged over the next mask mandate or this or that. Those are big deals. But they are not what is going to wipe out this Republic. Being unwilling to deal with the fact of our math.

And so think about this. We should be ashamed—and Republicans have part of this, too, as part of our sin. A small part, but part of it. We have been trying to do the math. Take a guess how much money we handed out per family in COVID aid. It is out there. So think of this.

I just showed you a bunch of slides saying working men and women have gotten poorer in the last year, but the debt exploded in the last 2 years, and now we are doing the math, saying, do you realize we put out over \$76,000 per household in cash, that was COVID cash? Over \$76,000. That is our best math at this point. And we have been having to go up and down different budget reports.

But do you feel, anyone here in this room or around the country, do you feel you got \$76,000 worth of value the last 18 months? But that is what we spent, and that is what we tacked onto my little girl's bonds that she gets to pay for.

□ 1245

Maybe the concept of throwing more and more cash and blowing up inflation and destroying the incentive to work and delinking society from the nobility of work—oh, by the way, that work actually makes them much less poor. Now you actually start to see that, over the last couple years, it made more sense not to participate in society.

This is what we did. Maybe they weren't thinking, maybe they didn't mean to, but this is what we did. So we delinked—we functionally financed staying home.

Then the last little perversity of just from today, you will hear many of the left try to tout that \$350 billion bill they just passed here in the House. If you dig through it, it is like, you know, a 5-year plan, government-planned economy. It really is sort of terrifying. But there is a little gem stuck in the left's bill they just passed.

Do you realize in there you have the pandemic ending in 2025? It is not based on: Hey, we have antivirals now. Hey, we have vaccines now. Hey, we now have home PCR tests. We have all the things we said we needed. They are here, but instead, we are going to keep the pandemic going—and that is what you all just voted on—until 2025.

My argument is, it is about the money. The pandemic declaration has become a conduit to hand out cash, hand out cash to your favorite groups to make corporate America, hospitals, and others addicted to the Democratic Party because they are handing out cash. And now, we just passed a piece of legislation that says the pandemic ends in 2025.

I beg someone out there: Please listen. Turn course on the policies. Come up with a unified theory that moves prosperity because economic growth, prosperity, is moral. But almost every act moved by the Democrats this year, almost every initiative from this White House, has made America poorer. It has made America more dangerous. And now, they are passing pieces of legislation to make sure we stay in this sort of dystopian chaos for years more.

Take a breath. Look at the data. Look at the misery this place has created over the last year. And seriously, I beg of you, consider having some self-awareness and some reflection and stop it.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY) for 30 minutes.

Mr. ROY. Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT), as he always does, making such a strong case for the need for this body to do the hard work that we are supposed to do and actually using not just taxpayer money but borrowed money remotely effectively.

He has made the case for a long time about how mandatory spending, the spending that we had promised to people through Medicare, Social Security, and other programs, is blowing the lid off of our budget and the need for us to get right and that there are ways that we can solve the problem. There are ways that we can take dramatic steps to lower the costs of healthcare, which the gentleman from Arizona talks about regularly, about the need for us to do to drive down the costs of healthcare so that we can actually contain this beast that is consuming our expenditures and causing us to have to borrow so much money, weaken ourselves against China, and so forth.

So, I thank the gentleman from Arizona for his consistency on this matter. Would that our body or even our own Conference be so consistent in having an interest in having that conversation.

I would note again for my constituents, for those people across the country, all of you that are watching this on C-Span, that I am speaking to an empty Chamber.

This is what we do. This is debate on the floor of the United States House of

Representatives. We come down, and we had five votes earlier today—I think four. One got wiped off. We have four votes on two amendments.

Amendments, right? They are amendments that are offered in the Rules Committee, where the powers that be decide what we get to debate on the floor of the House.

I am a Member of the United States Congress with an election certificate for the some 700,000-odd people in central Texas that I represent, yet I have never had the opportunity to offer an amendment on the floor of the House of Representatives.

This is not the people's House. This is a House of a handful of hand-selected individuals on both sides of the aisle who sit in a back room and decide what we get to debate about and what we get to discuss and what we get to vote on. My colleagues on both sides of the aisle know this, yet this is what we continue to do.

I gave a speech a little while back in December about the United States House of free stuff because that is what we are. Neither party has ever met a bill that they are not willing to vote for because it sounds good, right?

It doesn't matter how much it costs. It doesn't matter what it means in terms of debt, as my colleague from Arizona was just talking about in terms of debt. It just doesn't matter because we are the United States House of free stuff.

You got a bill that sounds good? You got a problem that you want to solve? Come to Congress. We will write you a bill. We will print you some money because there is no consequence to printing the money.

In what world is that a way to govern? The world is supposedly looking at us being this august institution, the people's House, and here I sit alone. My colleagues have headed off to the airport to fly home. We will come back on Monday. We will punch through a no doubt really important list of predetermined items decided by some Rules Committee people dropped on the floor and say: Take it or leave it. Vote yes or no.

Boy, that is inspirational, looking at how a bill becomes a law. Schoolhouse Rock laughs at us because there is no debate. There is no amendment. Both sides just come down here and vote to spend more money we don't have in order to buy your votes.

Well, our message to the American people is, are you for sale? Are the American people for sale by listening to every Member of this body go home and tell you all of the stuff they are bringing back home for you with borrowed money?

Well, we have a decision to make about how we are going to spend the people's money in the next 14 days.

Do we have a debate this week? Do we have a debate this week about the continuing resolution? No. That is the bill that is continuing to fund government that expires on February 18.

Did my Democratic colleagues, did the Speaker, come down and offer an appropriations package or bill and say: Hey, let's have a debate and a discussion about how we should spend the people's money and borrow more money in order to carry out the functions and our obligations. No, we haven't had that debate.

We voted on a garbage piece of legislation today that will do nothing to check China while we are sending our athletes over to bow down to the Chinese and allow them to take center stage on the world's stage. China. Never mind all the slave camps. Never mind what they are doing around the world. Never mind the espionage. Never mind the cyberattacks. Never mind what they are doing in working with Iran, working with our enemies.

Ignore all of that. Ignore the slave labor. Ignore the persecution. Ignore what they did to doctors trying to tell the truth about what happened at the Wuhan Institute of Virology. Ignore the virus born in China. Ignore all of that.

Just send our athletes over there, and then pass a bill on the floor of this House that has literally no chance of checking China, holding them to account, ensuring that they no longer continue to carry out the atrocities that they are carrying out and continue to attack the United States of America on a daily basis.

No, no, no, you just pass a bill, and you go give some speeches about: Oh, we are focusing on China. Oh, but rally around the TV tonight and watch our athletes hanging out over in China.

And then have the Speaker of the House say: Oh, don't speak out. Don't say anything. Something bad might happen to you.

Where is the spine or backbone of the woman from Texas sending the message to the coach of the Miracle on Ice hockey team that said beat those commie bastards? We don't have any of that here.

In 14 days, the funding of government expires, and what will we do? We will come down here on the floor with some forced, last-minute CR, and then each side will go out and give their talking points about how the other side's priorities are wrong, and you are going to borrow more money as we have now surpassed \$30 trillion.

More important than that, when Members of this body or the United States Senate vote for a continuing resolution—I want every American to listen to me. When they vote for a continuing resolution to fund government, they are voting to fund the enforcement of vaccine mandates that are causing our men and women in uniform to be forced out of service, to be discharged. They are enforcing laws against our men and women who are serving so valiantly on the front lines in healthcare, nurses and doctors that are getting forced out of service, forced out of the ability to care for people after a lifetime of work, doctors in the